



Consultation Responses

Findings

31st May 2015

General Public Responses

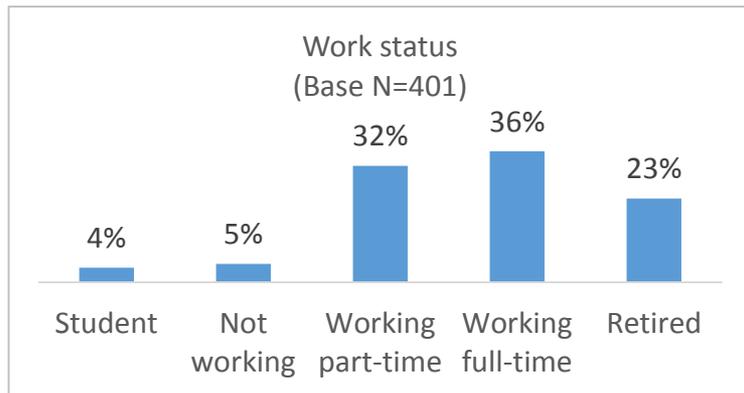
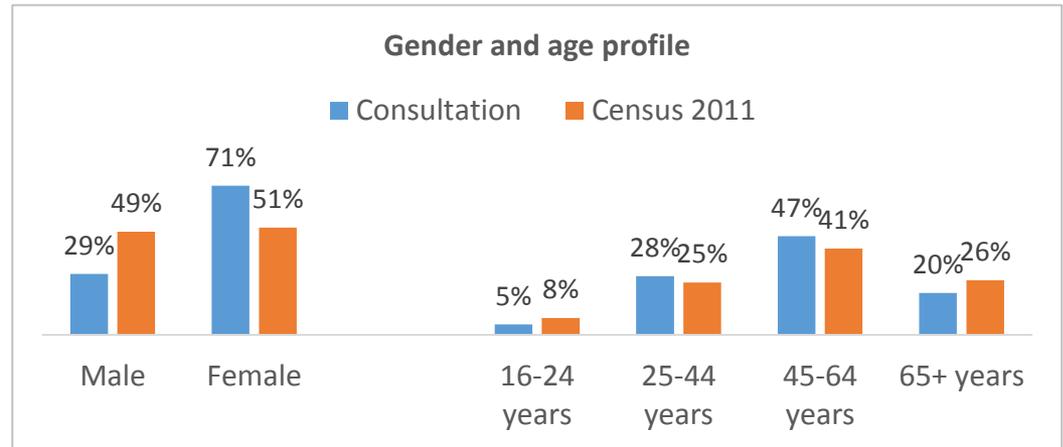
The general public consultation ran from mid February until 10th April 2015. Questionnaires were distributed at Chew Valley School events, at local community arts events and at local community venues e.g. shops and hairdressers. Responses could also be made online via The Valley website and this was advertised to the community via the Chew Valley Gazette, local primary schools and word of mouth.

A total of 435 completed questionnaires were received (255 online responses and 180 paper). This represents c.4% of the target adult population of the 5 wards of Chew Valley South, Chew Valley North, Mendip, Winford and Clutton (population of 10,179 over 16 year olds based on Census 2011 figures).

Women are over-represented amongst consultees (71% compared to the population estimates of 51%) whilst men are under-represented (29% vs. 49%).

The age profile of consultees is broadly consistent with the local population figures, although those aged 45-64 years are slightly over-represented (47% vs. 41% population) compared to those aged 65+ years (20% vs. 26% population).

The work status of the consultees mirrors the age profile as outlined below.



In total 270 consultees provided an address, and responses were obtained from a good geographical spread across the target area as follows:

- Chew Magna (10%)
- Chew Stoke (10%)
- Stanton Drew/Stanton Wick (8%)
- East/West Harptree (8%)
- Clutton/Temple Cloud/Hinton Blewitt (7%)
- Bishop Sutton (5%)
- Ubley/Blagdon (4%)
- Winford (4%)
- Compton Martin (4%)
- Whitchurch (3%)
- Dundry (3%)
- Bristol (3%)
- Pensford (2%)
- Chew Valley unspecified (15%)
- Other (4%)

There was almost universal support for the principle of a new facility; 95% support including three quarters of consultees who strongly support the new arts centre. Only a very small minority (1%) of those responding actively oppose the new venture or are neutral (4%).

The main reasons for support (as illustrated on the next page) are to enhance cultural opportunities locally for both young people and the wider community and to reduce the need to travel to Bristol or Bath.

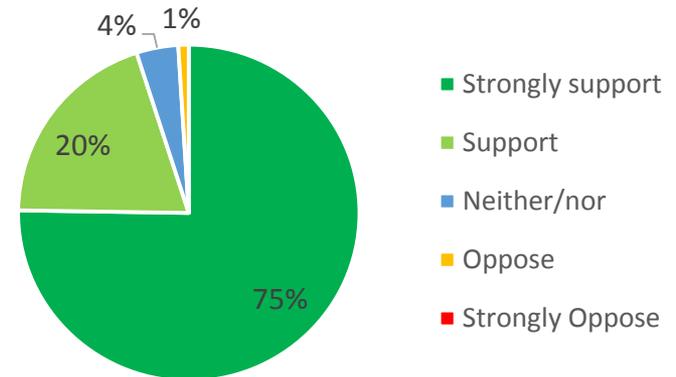
There were no significant differences in the level of support according to age or gender or geographical location.

Amongst those who are currently involved in performing arts activities (drama, music, art or similar) in the Chew Valley the majority (75%) would support this activity moving to the new arts centre, including 61% who strongly support a move. The reasons given for supporting move include:

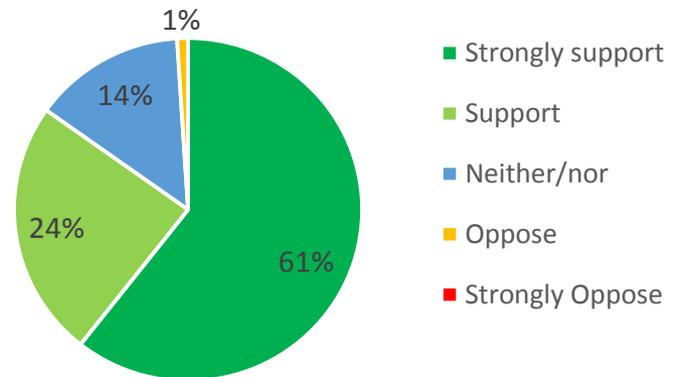
- Better acoustics/sound
- More/better parking
- Modern, purpose built
- Better facilities e.g. warm changing rooms
- Better access/more central

For those who do not want to see their current activity move the main reason given is a desire to continue to support local village halls and promote the sense of a village community.

In principle, do you support or oppose the idea of a new theatre and community arts centre in the Chew Valley?
(Base N=433)



Thinking about any drama, music, art or similar activity that you are currently involved with in the Chew Valley, would you support or oppose this activity moving to the new arts centre?
(Base N=333)



Positive comments and reasons for supporting The Valley include:

"A fantastic project, with two daughters who in the past were heavily involved in school and community arts projects this facility is long awaited. The opportunity to have a good facility and an increase in arts events is very welcome."

"Hurray! It will make a huge difference to a slightly dull cultural backwater. It could raise the status of the area."

"I am strongly supportive of not only the school having access to greater facilities, but that the local community having access to a venue which avoids the need to travel to Bath, Bristol or Wells for arts, drama, music and exhibitions."

"I grew up near here: <http://www.jacksonslane.org.uk/> - it was an excellent popular venue - cafe, family friendly and a breadth of types of art/culture events. It would be amazing to have something similar in Chew."

"I think it's a brilliant idea. Just what the Valley needs."

"I would like our children and young people to have the opportunity to experience 'the arts'. The cost of attending concerts, plays, pantomime, is beyond most family budgets . All primary children need more exposure to 'live' performances as this will often influence choices made later in life especially a decision to learn to play a musical instrument, or to take part in theatre, choirs etc. all these types of activity are good for general wellbeing and communities."

"It would be lovely to have somewhere local where we could enjoy events and performances, instead of having to travel to Bristol or Bath. It could also be a platform for local talent."

"This is a very exciting prospect, which I fully support."

"I think it's a wonderful idea the chew valley needs to keep its young people in the valley and not travel to larger unsafe towns."

"Great to give as much opportunity to our kids as other more privileged children have."

"I believe the impact of a community performance space/theatre on the local community would be huge. The arts play an important part in enhance quality of life for everyone. The value of a local space for young people in the area would be enormous."

"To make it inclusive : the rural poor are doubly disadvantaged and culturally excluded."

"There is a real good will to support events that are local, Investing interest in community activities is always rewarding and has the benefit of minimum travel hassle too."

"It would be great to have something accessible, currently don't go to theatre as wouldn't know where to park let alone get there."

Despite the overwhelming positive response to the principle of a new arts centre consultees expressed some concerns, mainly relating to the impact on local village halls, questioning whether there will be sufficient demand and also providing some specific suggestions:

“As much as I like the idea of a centre, I do wonder how valuable it would be for our community, given our proximity to Bristol and Bath, as well as being a fairly affluent demographic. I would also question the effect on local village halls.”

“I think it's extremely important that the high school acquires better performing arts facilities. I am concerned though, if it were to end up competing for space hire income with the local village halls.”

“I seriously doubt that an audience of 350 (from the maximum available at present of 250) would attract a higher profile performance/exhibition and that the public at large would still prefer to travel to attend concerts and exhibitions in Bristol or Bath.”

“I think you need a well prepared business plan. The idea of funding this project by hiring it to amateur groups needs to be realistic. Charges need to be set to no more than those made by other local venues.”

“I would be concerned about the demise of local village halls if existing clubs/ groups all moved. However, I would support the creation of new groups and bringing professional arts to the valley.”

“In principle this is an exciting idea. There is a danger that it might suck the life out of village halls which depend on regular bookings to keep going or, alternatively, that the hire charges turn out to be too high for local community groups. But a good performing space for music would definitely be worth having.”

“It's really important that this venue feels welcoming to those who do not have children at the school, as sometimes going to a venue within school grounds can feel daunting if you don't have a child going there.”

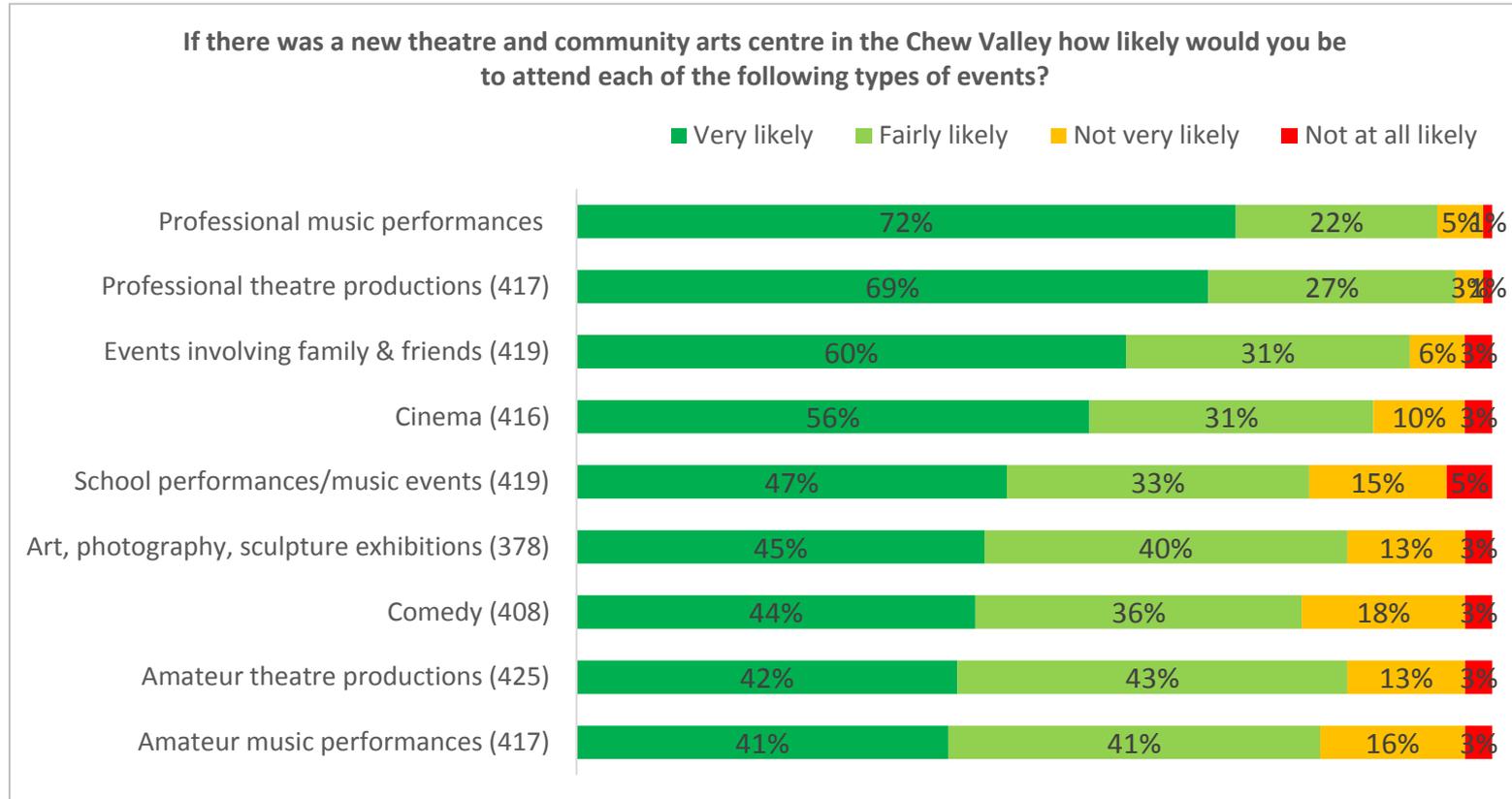
“Need to involve all stakeholders particularly those who would see their own village facility/ hall being threatened. I have used the Bradford upon Avon facility and would be interested on this business model to see how it could work as this is a bigger town and infrastructure. It needs to work beyond just getting the building up.”

“Should be Eco friendly and of high architectural quality. Should have a wide range of spaces to suit different uses. A licensed bar and cafe would encourage use and be a revenue stream. Must have sufficient parking. Needs to have character like the Tobacco Factory and not like Colston Hall. Should be landscaped and have good view and high quality external covered areas. Light pollution needs to be kept to minimum.”

“Many of the valley village halls have been refreshed + upgraded recently and it would be a shame if a new theatre detracted from their use - so partnerships need to be converted with am dram/music/singing groups that use these halls.”

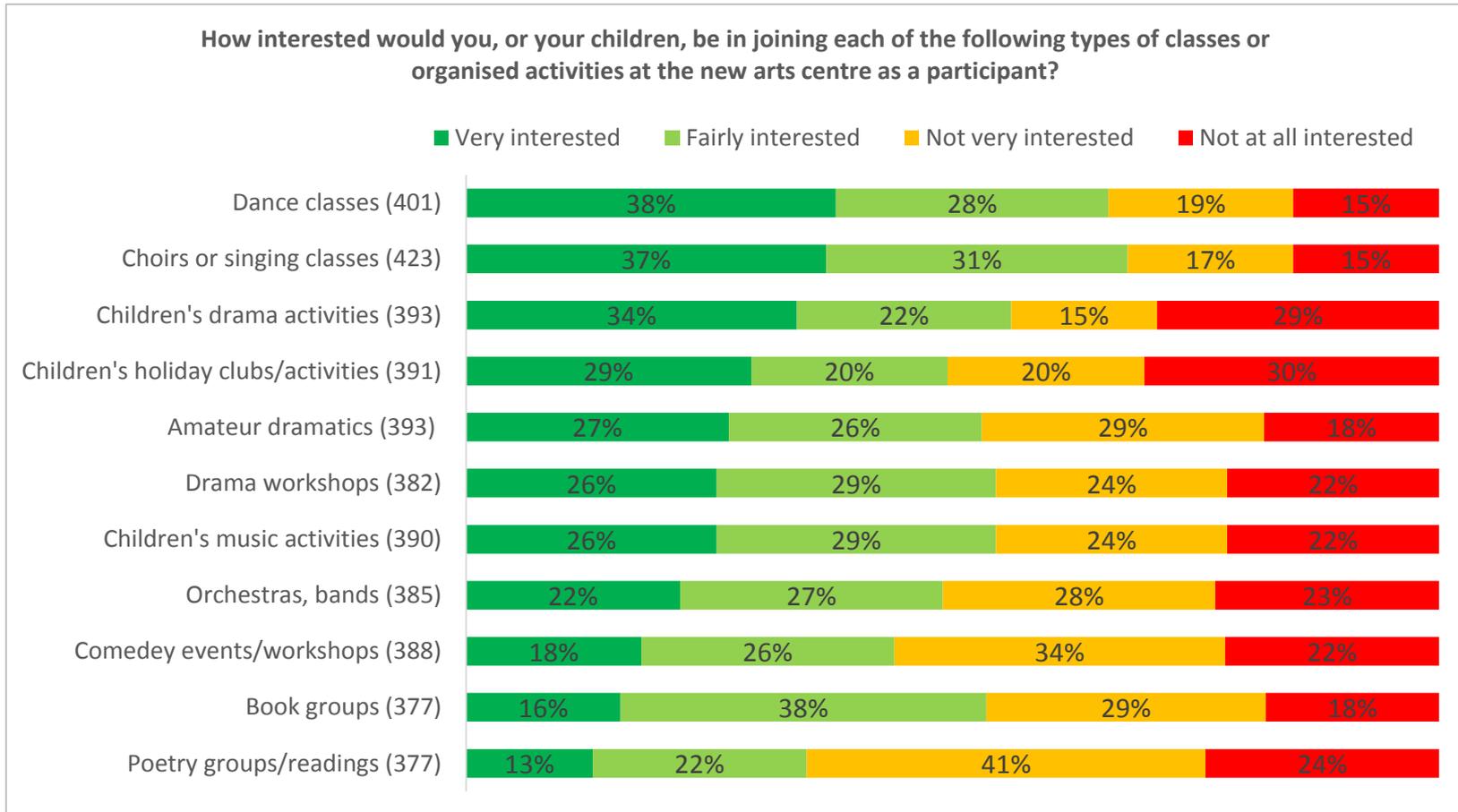
“My concern is that it will impact on village halls in the valley who rely on income from regular classes such as zumba etc. Also halls have to put on events to fund annual maintenance costs. However, a venue for larger events/ performances would enrich our lives in the valley. The Stables at Warrendon (Jonny Dankworth) is a prefect role model.”

There was an encouraging response in terms of likelihood to attend a range of different events as an audience member at a new arts centre. Consultees reporting being most likely to attend professional productions (72% music and 69% theatre) followed by events involving family and friends (60% very likely). Over a half (56%) say they would be very likely to visit a cinema. Although the other activities were slightly less popular over two in five say they are very likely to attend each type of event asked about. (There were no significant variations by age or gender in likely attendance, with the exception of school performances which would be expected.)



Other events which consultees would like to see held at the venue include: opera, ballet, lectures/talks, literature readings/poetry readings, pantomimes, musicals, circuses, craft shows, magicians, folk music, world music, fashion shows, live streaming of theatre/operas, open mic nights, literature festivals, one act play competitions and eisteddfods. The wide range of ideas generated by consultees demonstrates an enthusiasm for the project.

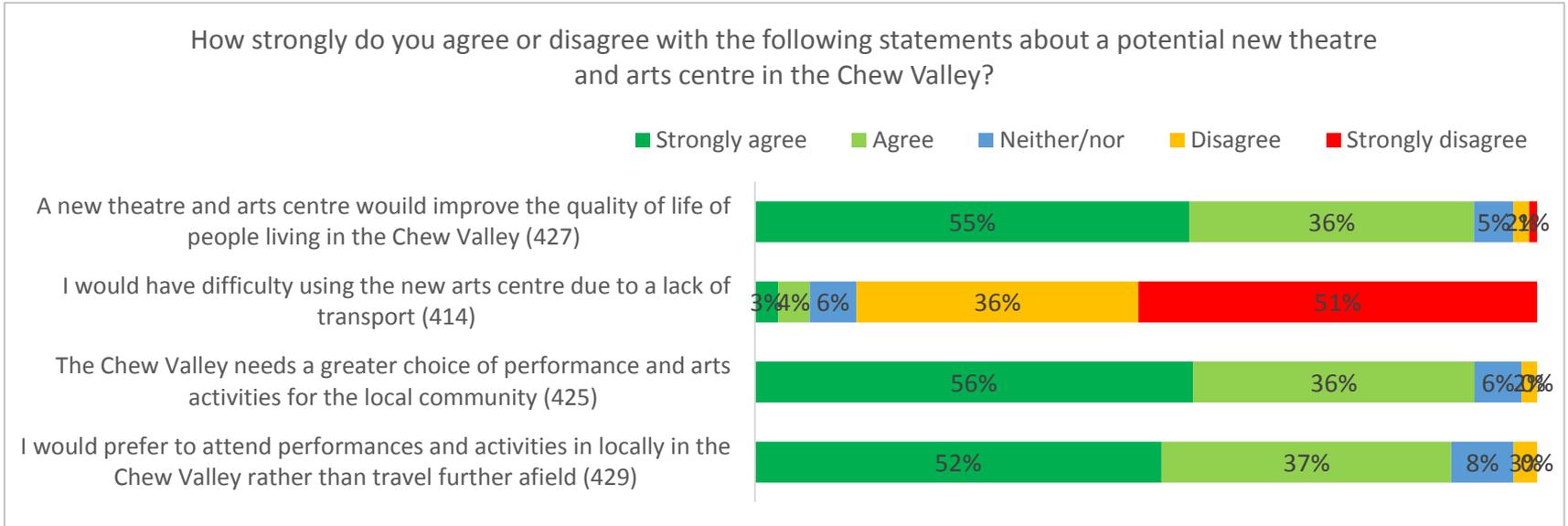
Although overall there is less interest in participating in activities at a new arts centre (as opposed to being a member of the audience) over a third report being very interested in dance classes, choirs/singing classes and children’s drama activities. At least one in five are very interested in most of the activities asked about.



Other events which consultees would like to participate in include: adult education classes, craft demonstrations, photography classes, art/painting/pottery classes, ballroom dancing and film making.

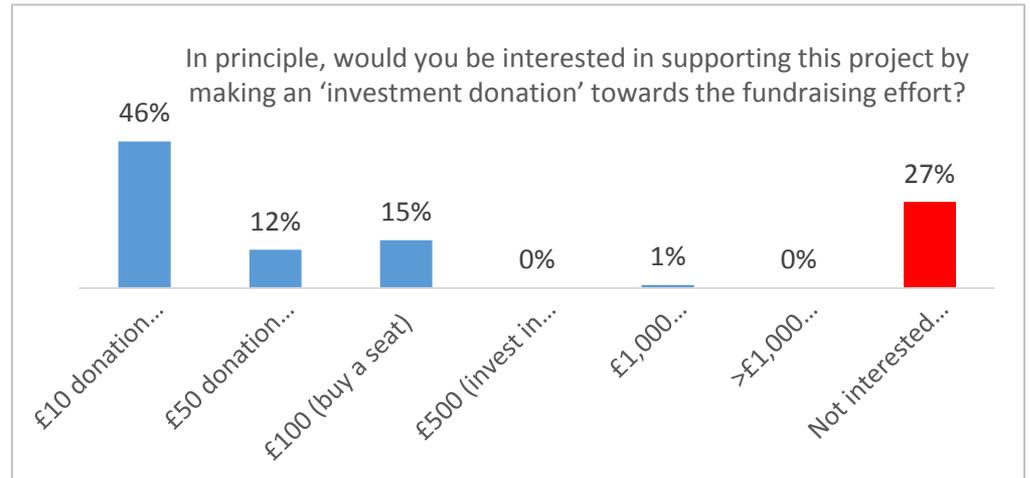
Events mentioned by single consultees include: radio show recordings, debates, circus skills workshops, jazz classes, improvisation skills workshops, puppetry workshops, dance classes aimed at boys and language classes.

The vast majority of consultees believe a new arts centre will improve the quality of life of local residents (91%), that Chew Valley is in need of a greater choice of performing arts activities (92%) and the vast majority would also prefer to attend performances locally (89%). Transport does not present a barrier to use of the arts centre for the majority of consultees (87%). However 7% would have difficulty accessing the amenities due to lack of transport – these are people spread across the region and from all age groups.



The majority of consultees (74%) would in principle be interested supporting the new arts project through a donation. Around half would make a donation of £10 (46%), 12% a £50 donation and 15% a £100 donation.

Support for the project was also demonstrated by the high proportion of consultees who wished to be kept informed of future developments (22%), and those who expressed an interest in helping directly (8%).



These results are based on the findings from 69 potential users of the venue. The potential users include a wide range of types of individuals and organisations:

Choirs, singing groups (11)

Bands/music classes/musicians (10)

Amateur Dramatics groups (8)

Touring drama companies (12)

Stage schools/providers of acting classes (6)

Other (5)

Dance schools (5)

Exercise/dance classes (4)

Artists (3)

Performing arts unspecified (4)

Comedy promoter (1)

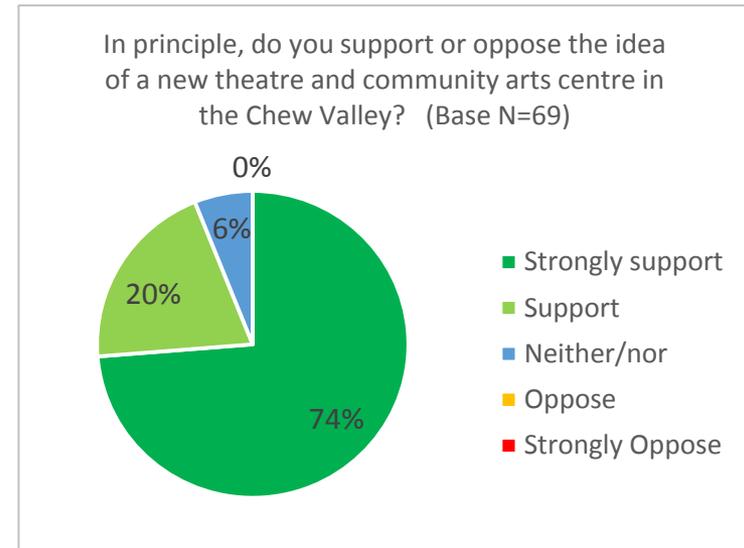
There is almost universal support for the principle of a new performing arts centre amongst potential users, with three quarters strongly supporting the new venture. Locally based arts and community groups hold more positive views. Potential users based outside of the Chew Valley area (who are generally less likely to use the venue) show less strong views. However, none of the potential users oppose the new venture.

The main reasons given for support are:

- Lack of larger performing spaces locally
- To support the arts/creativity in the local community
- To support community cohesion
- Need for better facilities for performing arts for the school & pupils
- Need for better facilities for performing arts for the community generally
- Lack of rehearsal spaces for bands
- Lack of high quality dance facilities
- Lack of facilities currently results in need to travel to Bristol

A small minority (n= 3) potential users expressed concern over whether a new venue would have a negative impact on local village halls or smaller amateur dramatics groups. There was one negative comment over potential funding: *"I don't think that I would use the facility so don't have strong feelings personally. If this is privately funded then it is fine that the money is spent as you wish. If this is government funded then I do not agree with the proposals as this area is not an area of deprivation and I believe the money could be better spent supporting other arts venues that are already struggling to keep their facilities going."*

A selection of potential users reasons for supporting The Valley are provided overleaf.



"A space like this is necessary to centralise and create a hub for community arts in the valley"

"Arts in the Chew Valley area is very strong. There are lots of classes and productions that take place throughout the year and there isn't currently a sufficient arts space to accommodate this. There are current spaces (mainly school halls) which are not up to date to give artists a full experience."

"As Chairman of CS ADG it would be a great asset to our group to be able to perform using suitable facility's"

"At present there is no theatre space in the valley apart from village halls. These are great but usually have few facilities."

"B&NES in general lacks good concert facilities. Even Bath is sadly lacking and not ideally suited fit for a contemporary purpose. There are school facilities available such Writhlington and Hayesfield though each have their own drawbacks while the rural areas of Chew Valley have none."

"Better facilities would be nice, but it might drain all the talent from smaller local Am Dram groups."

"I currently support the Tobacco Factory in Bedminster, and whilst it is not realistic to expect something on that scale, it would still be good to have a local Chew Valley facility for the arts."

"I think it would be a wonderful opportunity for uses of all ages but particularly young people to have a space to express their talents in the arts "

"It could be a good place for an amateur orchestra to rehearse or perform in."

"I would love to be able to go to the theatre locally rather than having to go into Bristol or Bath. I also like the idea of community arts."

"It gives the opportunity for amateur actors or those seeking to act an opportunity to see a variety of performances locally without spending a lot of money going to major venues."

"It is important that pupils, staff and residents have access to high quality local performance/training venues and there is currently nothing that fits this need in the area."

"It would be amazing to have a purpose built space in the Chew Valley. There are a lot of Arts activities taking place here and there isn't anywhere really perfect to showcase the local talent. Anything in Bristol is too expensive to hire."

"Would provide huge value to the school and connect the school to the wider community. I do fear a little for the support of our village halls however if this venture goes ahead."

"We often arrange concerts for charity and currently have to go out of the valley for suitable venues. A theatre in the Chew Valley would be ideal."

"This would be a great asset for the Chew Valley and could attract a wide range of performers, from local bands to international ballet companies."

"There are very few performance spaces locally and rehearsal space for bands etc usually require a trip to Bristol."

"There are so many theatre groups and organisations in Bristol and the surrounding areas there is a lot of competition for venues and rehearsal space so always good to hear there are new spaces."

"There are a lot of arts type activities going on around the valley and all have to negotiate time slots for the various small venues."

"Because theatre and arts activity is invaluable to community cohesion and a culturally rich society. Giving the opportunity for local professional artists and theatre makers to have their work their, but also for students and the local community to use creatively and engage with a range of arts that takes place there. It puts ART at the top of peoples' priorities and gives an importance to the subject in an educational setting."

"Having taught Music and Performing Arts at the school for nearly 20 years I believe that the community as well as the school would benefit greatly from such a centre. People in this rural community have to travel a fair distance to access performances and concerts and exhibitions at the moment and there is a lack of rehearsal space for creative groups in the valley."

The chart opposite shows the absolute numbers of potential users who are interested in hiring each type of facility. (N.B. The ‘very’ interested figures provide the most accurate indication of likely uptake.)

There is greatest interest in hiring the large auditorium (27 potential users are ‘very’ interested) and the lighting & sound facilities (22 potential users are ‘very’ interested – the intention is mostly to use these facilities simultaneously).

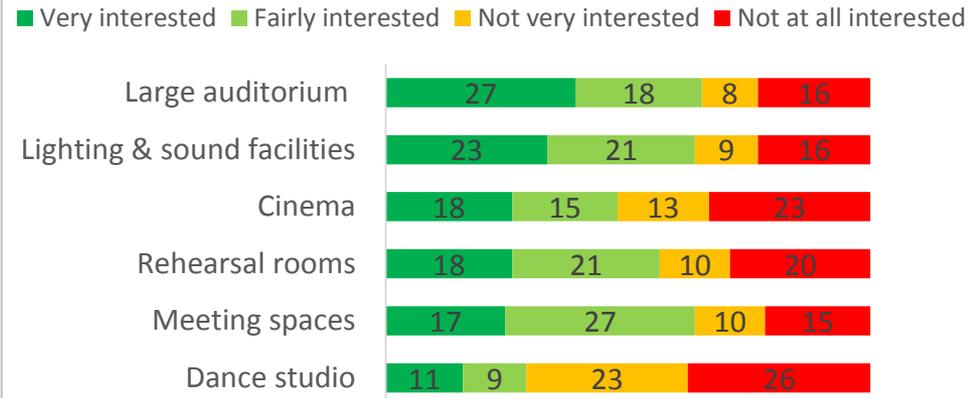
Local groups and individuals based within the Chew Valley express greatest interest in all facilities. Touring companies and those outside the area are more likely to want further information both about the venue itself but also the precise location (and therefore likely nature of the audience) before expressing interest at this stage. Indeed several organisations which were not interested in hiring still wished to be kept informed of progress and most supported the venture in principle.

Users are most likely to anticipate using the large auditorium and the lighting and sound facilities for occasional dates – very few regular (fortnightly or more frequent) use. For the majority ‘occasional use’ would consist of 1-3 evenings for an annual event.

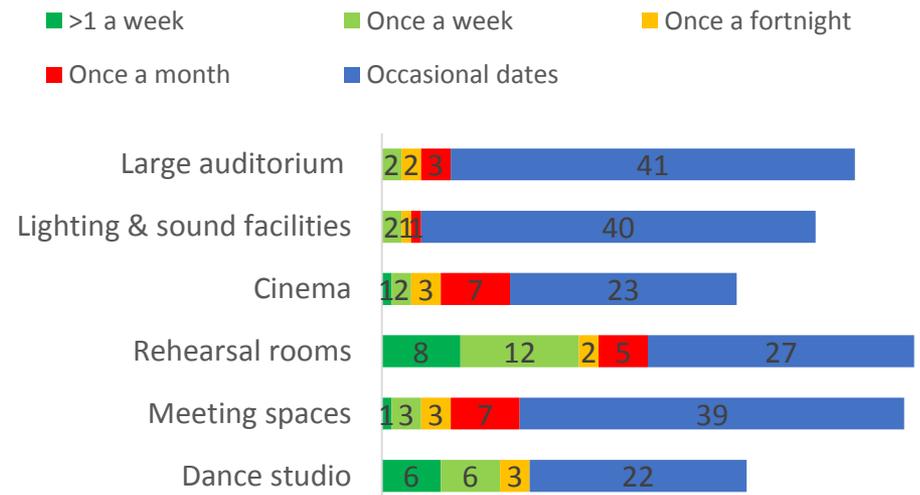
N.B. Several of the local potential users questioned whether 350 seats for the large auditorium was too large (200 appeared to be more appropriate).

Users are most likely to anticipate regular use of rehearsal rooms (n=20 at least weekly) and a dance studio (n=12 at least weekly).

How interested would you, or your children, be in joining each of the following types of classes or organised activities at the new arts centre as a participant? (Base = 69)

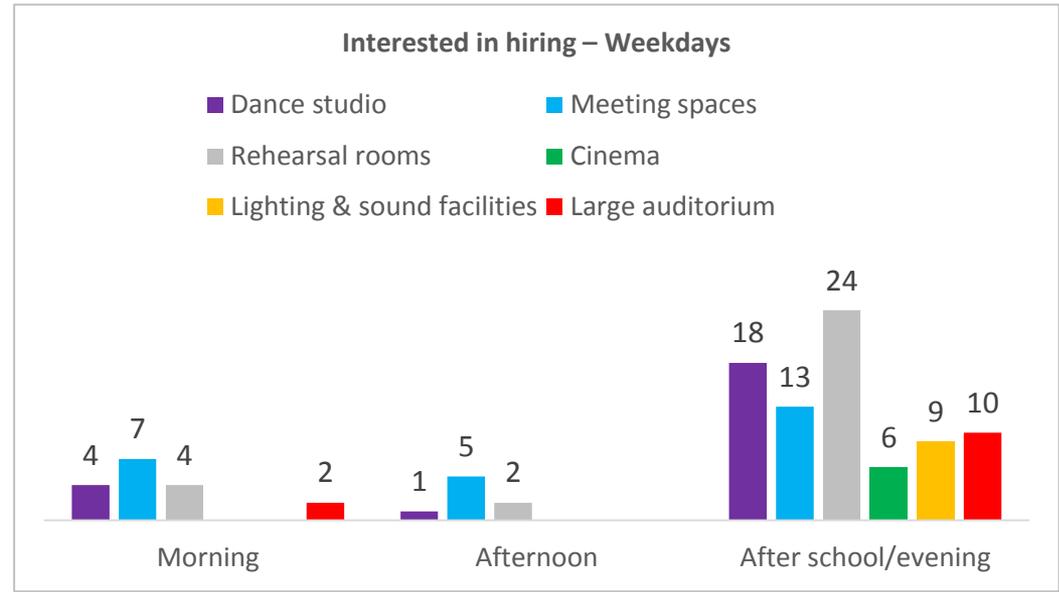


For each facility you might be interested in hiring how often would you be most likely to hire it?



When asked about the most likely times for hiring the facilities very few users anticipated using the facilities during weekdays – small numbers report an interest in using a dance studio (n=4 morning, n=1 afternoon) and meeting spaces (n=7 morning, n=5 afternoon).

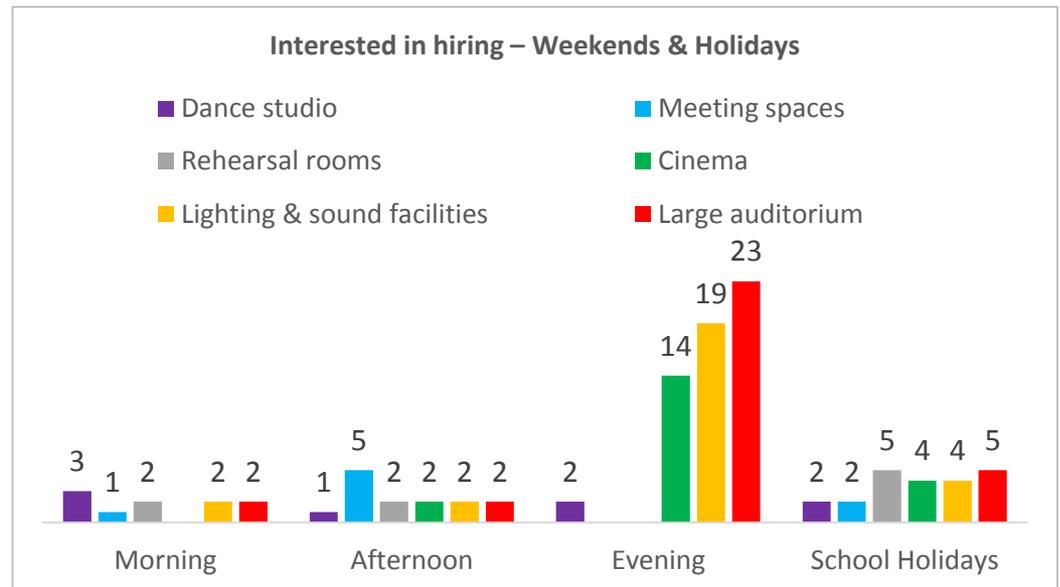
There is considerably more interest in hiring all the facilities out of school hours.



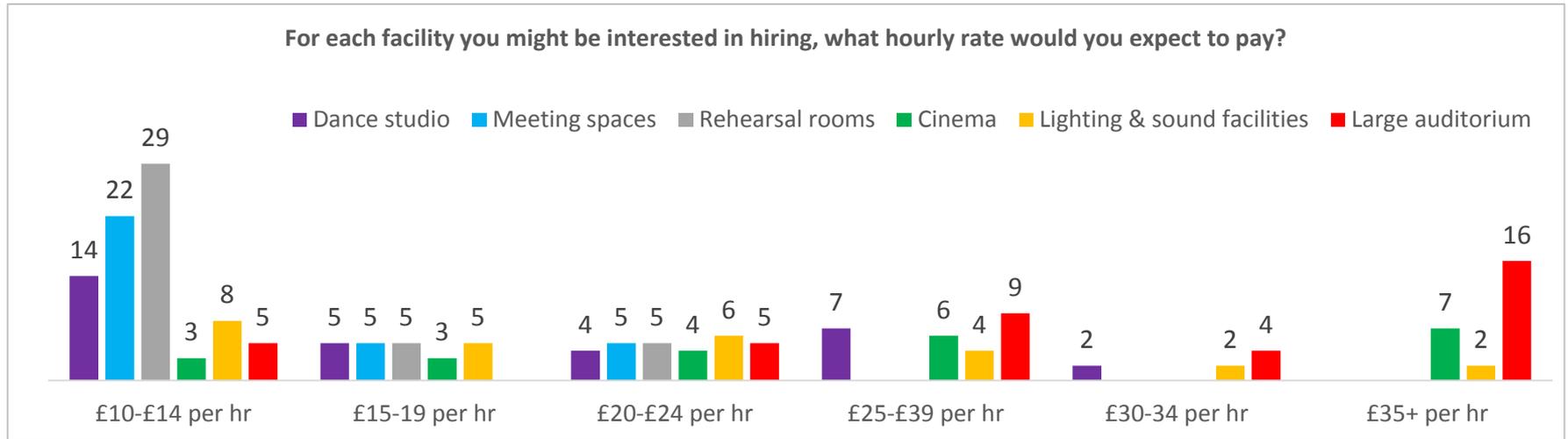
Similarly there is little interest in hiring any of the facilities during weekend daytimes, but considerably more interest in weekend evening use.

The demand for the large auditorium and lighting and sound facilities is primarily for weekend evenings.

There is limited interest in the use of the facilities during school holidays - fewer than 5 potential users for each facility asked about.



Potential users were asked how much they would expect to pay to hire each type of facility – responses below. N.B. Many of those interested in hiring the large auditorium commented that they did not have a clear expectation of price and the responses given were a ‘best guess’. It was also suggested that there should be a range of pricing options to reflect the different nature of users i.e. community groups, voluntary groups, fundraising activities or professional performances and membership type deals to encourage use by local groups. Some potential users expected to be able to negotiate prices dependent upon specific requirements e.g. £100 per full day for a rehearsal studio discounted to £50 per day if booked for a 3 week period.



Specific features potential users would like to see include:

- Soundproofing for the dance studio (so performances and rehearsals are not disturbed).
- A large dance room, not a strange shape (apparently strangely shaped dance rehearsal spaces are common!)
- Dance space to include: sprung floor, floor to ceiling mirrors, access to water in the dance space, ballet bars, or purchase free standing ones, harlequin matt, built in music/stereo system, warm space, a stage for teaching aerobics/zumba
- Café, bar in the foyer
- Box office facilities
- Better sound and light facilities and video facilities
- Band rehearsal spaces
- Art exhibition stands/facilities
- Changing facilities
- Back stage storage facilities (for props & costumes)
- Feasibility to add scenery

Specific features touring companies would like to see included:

- Laundry Facilities for the companies on tour (most commented it was one of the more difficult aspects of touring, for personal and costume clothes).
- Access to an open area for breaks and smokers in the cast and crew
- Access to WIFI,
- A green room large enough to fit 10 or more people (if it's a 350 seater, casts will be larger)
- Tea and Coffee/refreshment facilities, and local amenities.
- Large wing spaces
- Split dressing rooms (or ways to split up rooms)
- Wide access path and wide doors

When given the opportunity to make any further comments the majority of users wished the project 'good luck' and made general positive remarks, for example:

"Hearing news that there are thoughts and plans for dance facilities is music to our ears. We hope it is successful!"

"I hope it happens. It would be a huge boost to the community and the school."

"It sounds very exciting and I think would benefit huge numbers of the chew valley community."

"Probably going to be a long haul getting the funding but it will be a very worthwhile facility for the Valley."

Other substantive comments included some concern about the size of the auditorium, the need for local community groups using the venue to balance the cost of hiring against the likely ticket sales, and the impact on the village halls.

"Fantastic thing to be striving towards. I think if you make it accessible to companies it will take off. A similar thing is in Saffron Walden where they have a community cinema and excellent concert hall. Worth looking up. They have had a huge success with both. A community cinema is an excellent idea! You could also have 'festivals' with themes and visiting practitioners in film, music, art, theatre, dance, literature. You could also be a receiving house to touring companies with children's shows such as Tall Stories."

"I can only say that we MAY be interested in hiring the space, but I do have concerns. My main concern would be the size of the auditorium and the associated costs. Our theatre group in Chew Magna is used to performing to audiences of 100 or less so it may be that the Theatre would actually be too big for our needs. The hire costs would need to balance with the ticket sales which would be a concern for us. In general I think this could well be an issue for any small local groups."

"I think possibly the numbers of the seating may be too large for many organisations to use. Blackwell Playhouse seats about 120, I think, and that is quite large. I would have thought 200 may be a better number."

"I would be concerned about the village halls as we currently support them, using them for our rehearsals and shows."

"The use of the new auditorium and rehearsal rooms would be dependant on the hire costs as currently the cost of hire of Chew Magna Church Hall is reasonable given the facilities available and the limited budget/scale of production of our drama group."